

THE DUSUN TINDAL RESIDENTS OF LASAU TINTAPON IN KOTA BELUD, SABAH, A TRADITION OF USING ARTEFACT *TAJAU*

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This research looked into the use of artefact *tajau* as one of the Dusun Tindal counting traditions. In addition, this report will clarify how this native used the term *tajau* a century ago. This research also employs a qualitative approach fieldwork method with sources being interviewed to gather evidence. The researcher was taken to the study site by an informant who is an expert and a traditional chief in the village. This approach is employed so that the researcher can analyze and comprehend the study's use of the *tajau* in greater detail. Futhermore, this research demonstrates that *tajau* has been used since the first war until the present century.

Keywords: tradition, *tajau*, use of *tajau*, evidence, history of *tajau*.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is one of the results of common objects discovered prior to the outbreak of World War One in 1914. The tajau is owned by residents of Kampung Lasau Tintapon in Kota Belud, Sabah. According to Abdul Rahman (2019), tajau is a huge clay crock with various shapes depending on its use. This tajau has been used in a variety of ways in this village and has its own distinct characteristics and principles. This tajau is commonly used in death rituals, wedding ceremonies, and worship ceremonies. A tajau was one of the most valuable and important items for villagers in the late 1800s, both in terms of uses and materials. In the past, residents of this Kampung Lasau Tintapon worked as farmers and hunters. They make a living by growing rice, vegetables, and fruits, hunting animals, and catching fish. To avoid being abducted by Japanese troops, they often stayed in hilly regions far from the lowlands in ancient times.

However, to expand their agricultural land, the villagers have all moved to low-lying areas. Also visible are changes in the economy and population growth in line with global trends. Tribal chiefs (Huguan Siou), customary chiefs (Komohoingan Tangabaa), peasant communities, and women who participate in ceremonial (Bobolian) are the four types of chiefs for this tribe, with the 'Huguan Siou' being the highest of all. During this time, they work together to keep the village in harmony and safe from outsiders.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Kampung Lasau Tintapon



Figure 2: Jalan Lasau Tintapon

Resource: Field Research 2021

This study focuses on Kampung Lasau Tintapon, one of the villages near Kota Belud area, Sabah. This village is only 20 minutes away from the main district. This village is also full of fruits such as Cempedak, Durian, Rambutan, Nangka, Ubi Kayu, and others. This village was the largest producer of 'kunyit' and 'halia' in this district.

3. METHODS OF RESEARCH

For this analysis, actual details such as photos, the correct narrative, and so on are required. As a result, we used a qualitative approach to learn more about the origins and practises of the Dusun Tindal tradition by conducting a field study at Kampung Lasau Tintapon, Kota Belud, photographing real tajau and interviewing custom chiefs named Mr Banaas Bin Lantukan.

A qualitative methodology is a type of analysis that produces visible results (Lexy, 2007). This approach is being used to learn more about the Dusun Tindal culture's use of tajau. This is also to improve the tajau analysis and data. This journal is written after gathering all of the necessary data and facts, and relate it to other journals' theory and writing to further solidify the fact that this tajau exists. According to Marusic (2009), recent study findings are backed up by good and rigorous evidence, which demonstrates the research's reliability.

4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Funeral Tradition

First, we took several photographs that can tell us many stories about the artefact, such as its history, hierarchy, tradition, and so on. The informant leads us to the old tomb where the tajau was kept. It was about 5 kilometres from the village and only accessible on foot. This grave is also built on a hill because the area used to be a village with many people.



Figure 3: Old Tomb

Resource: Field Research 2021

Figure 3 shows an old tribal chief's tomb (Huguan Siou). At the time, this tribal chief was the village's strongest man, and he also led the others around other villages. Due to the influence of this tribe chief, other tribes such as the Bajau, Iranun, Ikaan, Suluk, and others fear this village and several villages below it. According to an informant, the tribe chief is a large and tall man with a strong body structure and adequate martial arts skills.

After that, in the 1990s, the tomb was built out of cement made by the villagers as a symbol of remembrance. A tajau was buried in cement at the end of the tomb. This tajau belonged to the tribe chief during his reign. It was also a gift from the villagers to repay him for his services. During that time period, this is an expensive gift. According to Muchlisin (2020), appreciation is one way to express gratitude to those who have helped others.



Figure 4: The Grave

Resource: Field Research 2021

This is a closer view of the grave. Modulung Kougun was the late tribe chief's name. The term 'Bantuga Lasau Tintapon' refers to the tribal chief of Lasau Tintapon. There is no date written on the stone because the informant claims that no one knows when he left, but it was most likely in the 1800s. This grave is also the first one you will see when you enter the cemetery because it honours the tribe's chief.



Figure 5: The Hierarchy

Resource: Field Research 2021

In this village, the hierarchy is one of the most respected. The more money you have, the more valuable your tajau is as an asset. Figure 5 shows a tajau in that village who belongs to a plutocrat. According to Wong (n.d.), the aristocracy and their relatives are ranked first in a social stratum table. Furthermore, this one belongs to the village's wealthy residents. The informant also mentioned that his great-grandfather bought the tajau, which originated in China, through a barter system in the 1840s. This tajau is extremely difficult to obtain, and it is only made to order by the Chinese merchants. As a result, the tajau is extremely expensive, and no one has ever been brave enough to remove it from the cemetery.

According to Zuraini (2012), the mechanism of buying goods is through the exchange of them for other things. It is also a very old way of doing business and a very old system in the world. According to Fatin (2015), this barter scheme was one of the earliest methods of trading commodities for services, predating the advent of currency. The informant's great-grandfather bought this tajau from China in the 1840s through a barter system in exchange for one adult Buffalo. At the moment, the cost was extremely high, approaching thousands of dollars.



Figure 6: Pattern

Resource: Field Research 2021

A closer view of the tajau pattern can be seen in Figure 6. This dragon painting reflects Chinese culture, which was scarce in Malaysia at the time. Even after more than 200 years, the colour of the substance used has not faded, indicating that it is extremely valuable. This tajau is a dowry for his loved one, and after his wife died, the dowry and other belongings to her were placed on top of her grave, but it is now covered by long grass, just like the other graveyards. It has remained there for nearly 200 years. As of 2021, the villagers claim that anything that belonged to the dead at the cemetery was cursed, and that the spirit of the dead is still alive and stuck in the tajau and their belongings.



Figure 7: The Coffin

Resource: Field Research 2021

Tajau was commonly used as a coffin at the time. It not only costs a lot of money, but it also represents a well-off family. When someone dies, they are usually buried in an old style coffin made from a large tree called 'kayu balak,' which is also very heavy and time-consuming to construct. According to Shoanna (2019), they used wooden coffins in the metal age, which can be seen in the interior. Because they want to fit the corpse inside, this tajau is quite large, and this tradition is well-known throughout Sabah. The Sabah Museum has already displayed some of the tajau. The evidence can be seen in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Sabah Museum Exhibition

Resource: Field Research 2018



Figure 9: The Old Coffin

Resource: Field Research 2021

The old coffin using tajau is shown in Figure 9. More than a century has passed since this one was made. Even though it had been buried inside, it was still in the exact position.



Figure 10: Closer View of the Tajau
Resource: Field Research 2021

Figure 10 shows a closer view of the tajau. Although it is already empty, the structure and colour are in good condition.



Figure 11: Tombstone
Resource: Field Research 2021

This is how the villagers used to make tombstones in the ancient centuries. They make a tombstone out of a long shape of river stone. They will then place some ritual items, including a tajau, on top of the grave. This tajau is solely to honour the dead. The tajau is a common type that was once used as a water collector and is therefore quite small. The tajau will then be placed in the middle of the tombstone and other items.



Figure 12: The New Tombstone

Resource: Field Research 2021

In the beginning, the village only used a river stone to mark the grave for a tombstone. As time passes, they are now constructing a modern cemetery. The original tombstone was kept, but the old tomb was restored. According to a myth, "the tomb was their real house after they died due to their no religion". If the tombstone is moved, the spirit will be unable to return home and will disperse and hunt the villagers. Meanwhile, according to Ustadz Mahfudz (2018), the grave serves a purpose and is a holy place that is worshipped in accordance with its location and role.



Figure 13: New Graveyard

Resource: Field Research 2021

Figure 13 shows the old tomb after it has been restored. Most of the people in the village were Christians. Traditional values, on the other hand, have never been forgotten.



Figure 14: Water Collector

Resource: Field Research 2021

Figure 14 shows a tajau that has been used to collect water. Because of its size and shape, it stands out among the others. It's more likely to have a small head and an oval shape. Apart from that, this type of tajau is also used as a food storage container for rice, fruit, and other items. Tapai, Tumpung, Sinamu, Bosou, and other traditional foods and beverages can also be made with this type.

4.2 Marriage Tradition

Marriage tradition has been modernised in Kampung Lasau Tintapon, but old values are still practised. These are the few marriage values:

Surung

Surung is a wedding tradition for the newlywed couple. As a dowry addition, one adult buffalo or a single tajau was required. This action will be carried out by the groom's side prior to the wedding ceremony.

Nopung

Nopung is a process that people must go through before or after getting married. One buffalo is given to the bride's family for breeding purposes, and one tajau is required to complete the tradition values. The payment can be made in cash or by loans after or before the couple officially marries.

Ginantai

During the wedding ceremony, ginantai is performed. The groom's family will accompany the groom as he enters the bride's house, playing the 'Gong' as they walk inside. According to Osman (2020), the 'Gong' is not only a musical instrument and a part of many tribes' traditions, but it is also a source of income for Sabah's people. In several villages in Borneo, the gong is also given as a wedding gift. The 'Gong' for the wedding ceremony is shown in Figure 15.



Figure 15: Gong

Resource: Google Image

Pampang Ralan

When Dusun Tindal holds a wedding ceremony, one of their traditions is to perform Pampang Ralan. Villagers will gather at the bride's house early in the morning to assist in the slaughter of a lamb or pig for the ceremony. The bride's family and the villagers were shown respect through these activities.

Dowry For Bride Side: Tajau, Gong, A pair of shoes, Kain Sarong, Ring, Cash, and a set for girl's bath needs.

The used of tajau now and before

The icon represent :

Y = YES

X = NO

Table 1: Used of Tajau

Use as	Before	Now
<i>water collector</i>	Y	N
<i>traditional food place</i>	Y	Y
<i>food container</i>	Y	Y
<i>coffin</i>	Y	N
<i>ornament</i>	N	Y

The use of tajau before and after is shown in Table 1. Tajau has been used as a water collector for the past decade, but its use for water has decreased in this century due to current development and new inventions for a better place to keep their clean water. Besides that, many years ago, this tajau was used for coffins along with logs or hardwood, but the villagers no longer use it because they have their own religion, which is Christian. In this era, tajau has been used as a decorative item such as a flower pot, stationery, and other items based on size, but in ancient times, tajau was graded as an asset due to its value.

Next, tajau has been used as a traditional food container and a traditional food place. This refers to a variety of traditional Borneo foods such as Nonsom, Bambang, Tapai, Lihing, and others. Because they maintain the tradition, the manufacturing

method has been used for a long time. The following table shows how to use the *tajau* as a food container:

Table 2: Used of Tajau for Food Container

Bambangan	
Material	- Bambangan - Salt - Bambangan seeds - Chili
Mode	- Cut the bambangan square - Cut the seed (Garus) - Mix all the ingredients - Put it in the <i>tajau</i>
Duration	7 days

Daat	
Material	- Fish (freshwater fish type only) - Panga - Rice - Salt
Mode	- Clean the fish - Mix all the ingredients - Put in the <i>tajau</i>
Duration	7 days

Tapai	
Material	- Rice (white/glutinous) - Sasad (Ragi)
Mode	- Cooked the rice (let it cool down first) - Mix with sasad - Put it in the <i>tajau</i>
Duration	- 2 week and above

Lihing	
Material	- Glutinous rice - Brown rice - Sasad (Ragi)
Mode	- Cooked the 2 type rice (let it cool down first) - Mix with sasad - Put it in the <i>tajau</i>
Duration	- 1 month and above

According to the table above, using *tajau* as a food container is highly recommended because the food can last much longer and stay fresh for a longer period.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, for the villagers of Kampung Lasau Tintapon, this *tajau* has always been the most valuable and expensive. Their status is also determined by the fact that they have a *tajau* as an asset. Because of its shape, size, and pattern, this *tajau* can be used for a variety of purposes. *Tajau* is an important part of the village's heritage, and it should be preserved for future generations to appreciate.

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